RESPIRATORY CARE
Associate Degree Program

What is a Respiratory care?
A respiratory therapist provides care for patients with lung and breathing problems. An RT works with mechanical ventilators and patient airways, and does analysis of blood to determine patient status. An RT may work in hospitals (intensive care units, emergency rooms, operating rooms, pediatric units, general floors), sleep laboratories, skilled nursing facilities, or in doctor’s offices. Starting salaries are $35,000-$42,000 per year. Learn more about the career at www.aarc.org The GTC Respiratory Care program requires all students to pass 3 comprehensive exams to graduate.

Length of Program
4 semesters (not including prerequisite courses); Program courses must be taken in sequence within the prescribed time frame.

Semester Program Begins
Spring Semesters; Full time; Day classes only

Application Process
1. Apply to Gwinnett Technical College at www.gwinnettech.edu and submit all transcripts from high school and previous college work, or take the COMPASS test.
2. Applicants are initially accepted into the Healthcare Science Certificate program while completing the prerequisite courses.
3. Spring 2016 Program Application must be turned in by September 1, 2015. Please download an application packet at: http://www.gwinnettech.edu; go to forms and documents, scroll down to program applications; select Respiratory Care Application.

Program Prerequisites
ENGL 1101 MATH 1111 or MATH 1101 or MATH 1113, BIOL 2113* and 2113L*, BIOL 2114* and 2114L*, BIOL 2117* and 2117L*, CHEM1211** and CHEM 1211L**
*These courses cannot be more than 5 years old at time of program application.
** These courses cannot be more than 10 years old at time of program application.

Additional Courses
There are 2 additional courses from General Education: one elective from Area II and one elective from area IV that are required for completion of the degree, but are NOT prerequisites. FYES 1000 also is required. Students are encouraged to take these courses prior to the program start date.

Some students may qualify for an exemption from FYES1000. Please refer to http://www.gwinnettech.edu/content.cfm?PageCode=fye

Program Deadlines
For Spring 2016 semester admission, all prerequisites must be completed by the end of the 2015 Fall semester.

Competitive Admissions
All prerequisites courses must be completed by the deadline with a minimum 2.5 GPA on the 6 prerequisites. Candidates are accepted on a GPA basis only. GPA calculations are based on all attempts of the prerequisites courses.

Program Costs & Requirements
Uniform scrubs, shoes, lab coat, stethoscope & instruments; $50 AARC membership; books; liability insurance; criminal background check; drug screening; immunizations for hospital clinicals; $500 test package at least $390 for 2 NBRC exams. Costs are approximated and subject to change.

For more information, contact: Cecilia Fuentes, Program Support Specialist at cfuentes@gwinnettech.edu or call (678) 226-6966. Building 200, Room 212. For admission and enrollment, contact: Enrollment Support Center in Building 100 or at healthteam@gwinnettech.edu

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Accreditation: The Respiratory Care program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care. www.coarc.com Programmatic outcomes for each program can be found at http://www.coarc.com/47.html
Respiratory Care

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Nature of the Work

Respiratory therapists (RTs)—also known as respiratory care practitioners—evaluate, treat, and care for patients with breathing or other cardiopulmonary disorders. Practicing under the direction of a physician, RTs assume primary responsibility for all respiratory care therapeutic treatments and diagnostic procedures, including the supervision of respiratory therapy technicians. They consult with physicians and other healthcare staff to help develop and modify patient care plans. RTs also provide complex therapy requiring considerable independent judgment, such as caring for patients on life support in ICU.

RTs evaluate and treat all types of patients, ranging from premature infants whose lungs are not fully developed to elderly people whose lungs are diseased. They provide temporary relief to patients with chronic asthma or emphysema and give emergency care to patients who are victims of a heart attack, stroke, drowning, or shock. To treat patients, RTs use oxygen or oxygen mixtures, chest physiotherapy, and aerosol medications—liquid medications suspended in a gas that forms a mist which is inhaled. Therapists connect patients who cannot breathe on their own to ventilators that deliver pressurized oxygen into the lungs.

Therapists who work in home care teach patients and their families to use ventilators and other life-support systems. In addition, these therapists visit patients in their homes to inspect and clean equipment, evaluate the home environment, and ensure that patients have sufficient knowledge of their diseases and the proper use of their medications and equipment.

Work Environment

RTs generally work between 35 and 40 hours a week, and may work evenings, nights, or weekends. They spend long periods standing and walking between patients’ rooms. In an emergency, therapists work under the stress of the situation. RTs employed in home healthcare must travel frequently to patients’ homes. Therapists are trained to work with gases stored under pressure. As in many other health occupations, RTs are exposed to infectious diseases.

Employment

RTs held about 112,700 jobs in 2010. About 81 percent of jobs were in hospitals, mainly in departments of respiratory care, anesthesiology, or pulmonary medicine. Most of the remaining jobs were in offices of physicians or other health practitioners, consumer-goods rental firms that supply respiratory equipment for home use, nursing care facilities, employment services, and home healthcare services.

Job Outlook

Employment of RTs is expected to grow by 28 percent from 2010 to 2020, faster than the average for all occupations. The increasing demand will come from substantial growth in the middle-aged and elderly population—a development that will heighten the incidence of cardiopulmonary disease. Growth in demand also will result from the expanding role of respiratory therapists in case management, disease prevention, emergency care, and the early detection of pulmonary disorders.

Earnings

Median annual wages of wage-and-salary respiratory therapists were $54,280 in May 2010. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $39,990 and the highest 10 percent earned more than $73,410.

Research the Career
